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A  
LETTER  
TO THE  
MAYOR and CORPORATION  
OF  
*DEALE*, in *KENT*,  
In Relation to their OPINION upon the  
TRINITY.

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L O N D O N :

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L E T T E R  
T O T H E  
MAYOR and CORPORATION  
O F  
D E A L E, in K E N T.

G E N T L E M E N,

**P** E R M I T me to congratulate you upon the Step you have lately taken, in *presenting* the Minister of your Chapel, Dr. *Carter*, in the Spiritual Court, for omitting to read, on the Days appointed by the Rubrick, that antient and venerable Part of our Liturgy, the *Athanasian Creed*. 'Tis, without Doubt, a very laudable Zeal you have shewn for the Purity of the Catholick Faith, and what will transmit your Memories with a sweet-smelling Saviour to the latest Posterity. It will be said, that, when Orthodoxy was retiring

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from the innermost Parts of the Land, and taking Wing for distant Regions, the Men of *Deale* arrested her Flight, and detained her for a while on the Borders of the Sea.

————— *Extrema per illos  
Religio excedens Terris Vestigia fecit.*

These, Gentlemen, are *your* Honours, and Babes will be taught to lisp them in the Arms of their Nurses.

Since you have taken upon you to decide in Favour of this Creed, by insisting upon the Use of it, we are not at Liberty to suspect, that you do not clearly understand and most heartily believe it. It would be too great a Reflection, either upon your Heads or your Hearts, to suppose you would require your Pastor to make any-thing a Part of the Church-Service, while the Meaning of it appears hard and obscure to your Reason, or you are not sincerely persuaded of its Truth.

Taking it therefore for granted, that you have studied all the Points of the *Athanasian Creed*, cleared up all the Difficulties, and demolished all the Objections,  
that



that have been urged against it ; in short, that you are complete Masters of the whole Controversy upon the Trinity ; I call out upon you for Assistance. It is my Misfortune to be one of those who are not quite so clear-sighted in this Matter ; it is a long Time that my Mind has been subject to some Doubts concerning the Expediency of using this Creed, and, indeed concerning it's Truth : And, though I have really taken some Pains in turning and tumbling over and over again the Writings of those great Men, who defend its Use, and the Doctrine contained in it, I cannot get so well satisfied as I should be glad to be. For this Reason, Gentlemen, it is, that I address myself to *you*, who are sprung up as new Lights in the Church, for the Downfall and utter Extinction of Heresy. From you I expect *that* Information, *that* Resolution of my Queries, which I have in vain looked for from every other Quarter.

Pray then, will you be pleased to give me some Account upon what Grounds the Church of *England* proceeds in adhering so inviolably to this Form of Faith ?

Why is it to be held so sacred as never to be parted with? Can its Antiquity only bind upon us for ever a Form composed, no-body knows by whom, and introduced into the Church in the darkest Ages of Popish Ignorance? And, indeed, of the true Nature and genuine Spirit of Popery it seems strongly to participate. What else are those severe Denuntiations of God's Wrath, which it pours so plentifully forth against all those whose Heads are not turned to believe every Article of it? I hope to see some new Arguments from you, in Vindication of these *damning Clauses*, all the old ones being, in my poor Opinion, quite infirm and insufficient for the Purpose. What avails it to tell us that these hard Sentences are not to be applied to the *explanatory Passages*, but only to the general Doctrine of a *Trinity in Unity*? Are we to be persuaded out of our common Reason and Understanding? Does not the plain, obvious Sense and Meaning of the Words speak the contrary? Did this Distinction, think ye, every occur to an ordinary Head? Is not this a Part of the

Service

Service in which the whole Congregation is to join? And would one Person in ten throughout the Kingdom ever dream of separating it into Verses that *must* be believed, and Verses that need not? Do they not evidently swallow it all in a Lump together? And very comfortable to their Hearts without Doubt it is. But I must ask, if these Passages were not inserted with an Intent that they should be *believed*, what were they inserted for? Only to give Offence? What Business have they here? To what End is a Doctrine explained, but to be received and assented to, according to that Explanation? Away then with these absurd and childish Distinctions, invented only to support, what, in the natural Construction of Language, is utterly indefensible, and produce us something new from the Storehouse of *Deale*, something that is fit for a Man of Sense to attend to, that looks at least something like Argument, in Answer to the foregoing Questions.

It is really curious to observe, what wretched Shifts the most ingenious Writers

ters are put to, when they set their Pens a going upon this Subject; a most remarkable Instance of which is to be met with in the posthumous Sermons of the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. Seed: This excellent Man makes it the Business of one of his Discourses to vindicate the *damnatory Clauses* in the *Athanasian Creed*; but he was working against his Nature; the Goodness of his Heart got the better of his Principles; and, though his professed Design was to establish the Creed, he virtually gives it up: For, besides the Necessity he found himself under of having Recourse to the senseless Distinction already mentioned, in direct Opposition to what the Creed itself asserts, that every one, that is, every one to whom the Christian Faith is fairly proposed, must believe the Doctrine contained in it, under the Penalty of certain Damnation, the Conclusion of good Mr. Seed's Argument is, that a Man may not *believe* it, and yet not be damned: Which is all we desire to have allowed us. I know not in what Light this Sermon may appear to the learned Gentlemen of *Deale*; but, so far as I can judge,



no Objector to *Athanasius* could ever have wished for a fairer Testimony against him. Those who personally knew this worthy Clergyman, and familiarly conversed with him, in the latter Part of his Life, know that he did not himself believe the Doctrine of the Trinity in that Height to which it is carried in the *Athanasian Creed*; and, notwithstanding his Eulogium upon Dr. *Waterland*, in the Sermon he preached at his Funeral, that he had for some Time before his Death departed from the Rigour of this great Doctor's Opinions upon that mysterious Subject.

But let us go a little further into the Merits of the Creed itself. I presume it will not be controverted, that the plain Design and Intent of it was to establish the Notion of the supreme Deity of our Saviour Jesus Christ. If this be not its Design, there is no Meaning in Words. For it saith, *In this Trinity none is afore or after another, none is greater or less than another.* — Upon the latter Part of this Verse I have seen it observed, (and, till it is better cleared up by you, than it has been



been by any - body else, I must think there is some Weight in the Observation) that it seems expressly to contradict our Saviour's own Words in the 14th Chap. of *John*, " My Father is " greater than I." It has often been observed, that our Saviour seems here to speak of himself in his whole Nature; that no known Rules of Criticism will justify the Supposition that he intended to separate his human Nature from the divine, and limit his Assertion to the former only. To which I add, that, unless some similar Forms of speaking can be produced from other Authors in Support of this partial Construction, it cannot be safe to make it the Ground of a Proposition, which is to enter into the publick Worship of God, and be repeated in the Church, as Part of our religious Faith. For what if the *obvious* Meaning of the Words should happen at last to be the *true* one? Why, then we are guilty of nothing less than asserting a downright Falshood in the Face of Heaven; which you must permit me to look

look upon as a Thing not altogether innocent.

To me, Gentlemen, the whole Tenor of the New Testament seems to lie against the Doctrine of *Athanasius*: To discuss all the Texts that look this Way, would much exceed the Bounds of a Letter; I shall, therefore, only pick out a very few, and give you my Opinion, as to what may be contained in them; in full Expectation of being corrected and set right by you, should I happen to have considered them in a wrong Light, and made false Conclusions from them.

Let us take those Words of our Saviour, *Mark* xiii. 32. " But of that Day  
" and Hour knoweth no Man; nor the  
" Angels which are in Heaven, nor the  
" Son, but the Father." Now I desire to be informed, in the first Place, whether, by the Word *Son*, the Disciples were not to understand, that our Lord intended and signified *himself*, who was there standing and discoursing with them? If he here speaks of *himself*, he plainly denies his own Knowledge of the last Day and Hour. The *Athanasian* System affirms

Christ to have been God and Man united: As God, it was impossible for him to have been ignorant of any thing; if, therefore, he did really know this Day and Hour, in any Part of that Nature which constituted *the Son*, I see not how he can be acquitted of having affirmed a Fact that he knew to be false. It is, at least, such an Equivocation, such an Imposition upon the Understandings of his Hearers, as ought not, in my Opinion, to be imputed to him. For my own Part, I can consider this Passage no otherwise than as a regular Climax, in which the Speaker begins with the lowest Order of intelligent Beings, (so far as appears to us) and ascends gradually to the highest. "Of that Day and that Hour knoweth no Man;" here the Day and Hour of the last Judgment is denied to be the Object of human Knowledge: "Nor the Angels which are in Heaven;" here our Saviour rises a Step higher, and declares all the Orders of *Angels*, who are far superior to Men, excluded from the Knowledge of it: Next he proceeds to the *Son of God* himself, whom he likewise

wise declares to be destitute of Knowledge in this Matter. Now, Gentlemen, pray tell me, does not the Order of the Climax require, that we take what is affirmed of the Son, as affirmed of him in that Nature in which he is superior to the Angels? Is there Common-Sense or Consistency in the Words upon any other Explanation? Can it be supposed our Saviour should first exclude the whole Race of Mankind in the Aggregate, then rise to the Angels, after this go backwards, and assure us that such a *particular* Man knows nothing of it? How would this Manner of speaking be treated in a modern Composition? I am afraid the unlucky Author would scarce escape the familiar Appellations of Fool and Block-head.

I must here add one further Remark, that, if it be true, according to the *Athanasian* Hypothesis, that there are *two* distinct Natures in Christ, these Words plainly prove there are *three*: *First*, The Nature of Man; *Secondly*, That Nature in which he was superior to the Angels, and yet in which he did not know the



Day of Judgment; And, *Thirdly*, the Nature of God, in which he could not but know it. This, then, seems to be one of those Arguments that prove too much: And the Logicians, I think, tell us, an Argument that proves too much, proves nothing at all.

These two Passages of Scripture already mentioned are expressed in Terms so free from Obscurity, that, so far as I know any Thing of Language, they are incapable of being interpreted into more Senses than one. Possibly, Gentlemen, you may tell me, that, although, according to the common Rules of Criticism, they may seem to exclude the Notion of the supreme Godhead of the Son, yet the Analogy of Scripture makes it necessary that we understand them in a Sense accommodated hereunto. You will say, there are other Passages that plainly prove and establish this Doctrine; and, therefore, whatever at the first <sup>view</sup> may be thought to make against it, must, some Way or other, be bent and twisted into a Conformity with them. This, I believe, is not a new Way of arguing, though I cannot



cannot think it quite satisfactory. For, even supposing the Texts which assert the absolute Equality to be full as obvious and clear as these which assert the Inferiority, what Reason can be given, why the latter are to be explained by the former, any more than the former by them? It is a Question, whether what is called the *Analogy of Scripture* would not, even in this Case, determine it the other Way. But, upon my Word, (dangerous as it may be to speak it, yet speak it I must) there is, I think, in every one of those Texts, that are produced by the *Athanasians*, something wanting of that Clearness, that simple determined Sense, which cannot be denied to those we have just been considering. Do they found their Opinion upon any Title or Appellation with which they see our Saviour dignified in Scripture? Let us go to St. *Paul*, who thus informs us from whence he received it: *Phil.* ii. 9. “ Wherefore God  
 “ hath highly exalted him, and given  
 “ him a Name above every Name.”—  
*Given him a Name, ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ ὄνομα:*  
 By which Words the Apostle signifies to  
 us,

us, that the Name he meant, whatever it was, (suppose that of God) did not belong to the *Son* by natural, inherent Right, but was granted to him by the Father, as a special Act of Grace and Favour, that it was bestowed upon him as a *free Gift* : So that, whatever Honour he may be intitled to in Consequence of this Name, it is all ultimately to be referred to the Father who gave it. I make no Apology, Gentlemen, for throwing in a Scrap of Latin or Greek, because I look upon you as a learned and ingenious Generation of Men, who have not failed to consult those Books, whence all our Ideas upon this Subject must be formed, in the original Language.

Do the Scriptures ascribe divine Attributes to the *Son*? Do they affirm, that in “ Him dwelleth all the Fulness of “ the Godhead bodily?” *Col. ii. 9.* If we consult the same Apostle who gives this magnificent Description of him, we find he had declared, in the Chapter preceding, whence this Plenitude was derived. “ It pleased the Father,” saith he, *ver. 19.* “ that in him should all “ Fulness

“ Fulness dwell.” Whatever, therefore, may be precisely meant by the *Fulness of the Godhead*, this also is to be referred to the *Will* and *good Pleasure* of the Father.

Let it now, Gentlemen, be observed, that it is not my Design to press these Passages, (clear and forcible as they may appear) farther than is barely necessary for the Argument I am upon: I shall not insist upon their being admitted as a decisive Proof *against* the *Athanasian* Doctrine, and absolutely destructive of it; but only, with great Deference, beg your Opinion, whether they may not be considered as a sufficient Ground and Foundation for *Doubt*? Are they not strong enough to justify a Man in Hesitation and Suspense, and to take away the Necessity of supposing him influenced by secret and evil Passions, by Pride, and Prejudice, and a carnal Mind? These are the Salutations, with which those, who presume to call in Question this Doctrine, are generally accosted; but, surely, without a proper Regard to Justice and Charity; unless it could be shewn, that the Texts I have pointed out are of so little Weight

Weight and Importance, as not to merit our Attention.

If, then, there is enough in Scripture to produce, with Respect to the present Subject, that State of Mind which we call *Doubt*, there is enough to set aside and destroy the *Athanasian Creed*; for the Plan of this Creed does not admit of *Doubt*, or any the least Tendency to it: It goes upon absolute Certainty that every Thing declared in it is true: It could not affirm more, was every Proposition proved to a Demonstration: It damns with Infallibility, leaving me no Room to suppose, that a Man, who does not believe it, can, according to the strict Terms of the Gospel, possibly be saved. And nothing need, I think, be added, to shew how very ill a Thing I do in dooming a Man to certain Damnation, when that very Gospel, we all profess to make our Rule, supplies me with Reasons to *doubt* whether he shall be damned or no.

There are few better Arguments, I own, to me of a Doctrine's being *disputable*, than the seeing it *disputed* by great and good Men, with equal Zeal and



and equal Tenacity. This hath been so remarkably the Case upon the Doctrine of the Trinity, and that within the present Century, that I shall be excused speaking of it a little more particularly. Dr. *Waterland*, the great Advocate for *Athanasius*, was, without Doubt, a Person of considerable Learning and Abilities; and I do verily believe him to have been an exceeding good Man, one who had the Interests of Christianity very truly at Heart. I have no Reason to think Dr. *Clarke*, whom he opposed, was not as good a Man, as sincerely concerned for the Advancement of Religion; and I cannot avoid esteeming him as greatly superior in Point of Abilities. These two Divines differed in Opinion about the Sense of certain Propositions delivered in the Sacred Writings: May it not hence be concluded that the Propositions themselves are of uncertain Signification? In my Mind, the Fact speaks itself. How was it possible they should disagree in their Way of explaining what was plain and clear, and incapable of but one Sense? I am not disposed to believe they

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disputed for the sake of disputing ; and therefore I am compelled to infer that what Writers of such Characters saw in different Lights, and could not at last settle, was in itself doubtful. It would, I am persuaded, be of no Disservice to Religion, if we would suffer the frequent Examples and Facts of this Sort, that have happened in the World, to lead us into Gentleness, Modesty, and Moderation.

As you have now, Gentlemen, procured to your poor Souls the Comfort of this Creed again, which Dr. *Carter* had so inhumanly deprived them of, I only beg that, the next Time you are blessed with it, you will call *one* Person in this Nation into your Minds : The Person I mean, is the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. *Whiston*, who, you know, hath openly and publicly renounced the Creed itself, and the whole Doctrine contained in. When you have brought this honest Old-Man to your Thoughts, (for I cannot help thinking him so) consider yourselves pronouncing a Sentence of Damnation upon him, with the utmost Solemnity, in the Church of Christ. For, though you  
may

may not take upon you to say how far *uncovenanted Mercy* may extend, yet hereby you piously declare, that, according to the strict Terms of the Gospel, he is intitled to none. How far this Circumstance will contribute to the improving your Veneration for the Form of Faith we are talking of, I can only judge from the Effect it hath npon myself.

I make no Doubt but you are well acquainted with the *Essay on Spirit*, the last Treatise, of any Consequence, that has been published upon this Subject. One of the Points, which the Author, who is said to be Right Reverend, undertakes to shew, is, that the Fathers, who composed the *Nicene Council*, understood the the Words *εἰς* and *ὑπόστασις* in the same Sense, as signifying one and the same Thing. This he makes evident by producing the very Clause which they subjoined at the End of the Creed, anathematizing all those who should say, “ That  
“ the Son existed out of any other Hypo-  
“ stasis, or *Ufia*, than the Father.” He observes, that this Clause is omitted out of our present *Nicene Creed*; possibly, because it

contradicts in Terms the *Athanasian*, which asserts, “ That there is one Hypostasis of the Father, and another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.” I do not remember to have ever seen this Contradiction marked out, before I met with it in this admirable *Essay*; but I cannot help considering it as of great Force and Pertinency in the present Argument. I have been in daily Hopes and Expectation of seeing this Treatise answered by some of our eminent and orthodox Divines, whom it fairly challenges to the Combat; but hitherto I have hoped and expected in vain; though I depend upon having the Contradiction alledged solidly reconciled and accounted for by *you*.

For my own Part, to speak my Mind freely, I never could understand what Writers mean, when they talk of a *Person* as something different from a *Being*; it is a sort of Language to me quite unintelligible, downright Jargon indeed. When they tell us, that in the Divine Nature there are three Persons, three intelligent Minds, three Consciousnesses, all

as

as distinct from each other, as *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, they give me a perfect Idea and Description of three distinct Beings; nor can I apprehend it to be any other than plain Tritheism. They would persuade me, indeed, this is only *above* my Reason; but, in my own Conception of Things, it is directly contrary and repugnant to it. If what they affirm be true, I have no one Principle in my Mind that I can depend upon, I give up all Pretensions to Certainty in any Thing. There are, I think, irrefragable Arguments to prove there can be but *one* supreme Mind. He that maintains there are three will find it hard to produce a single good Reason against the Existence of threescore; insomuch that, if he understood it to be *so* revealed, I see not upon what Pretence he could scruple admitting it.

One of the chief Points insisted upon against us is, that, if Christ be not supremely God, we are guilty of Idolatry in paying divine Honours to him; but I think myself sufficiently authorised to pay him these Honours in virtue of God's Command, because I perceive no one Principle of Reason

Reason contradicted by supposing it possible for God to appoint them. There seems to be as much Reason, on the Part of the *Athanasians*, for Care, and Caution, and Diffidence, lest they should at last be found in the Wrong, because the Consequence of an Error in them is a direct Breach upon the Unity of the Godhead : So that it may be as dangerous for a Dr. *Waterland* to be mistaken, as for those who differ from him ; perhaps more so : And whatever can be pleaded in Excuse for a Mistake by those of *his* Persuasion, we pertinently take up in Defence of ourselves. You say, you are led into the Notion of *absolute Equality* by the Declarations of Scripture : We say, that by the Declarations of the same Scripture we are induced to believe the *Son* inferior to the *Father*, even in the Whole of his Nature.

It will give me full Satisfaction upon the Subject, so far as Reason can be a Judge, if I can get an unsophistical Answer to these two easy Questions. Was the *Generation* of the *Son* an *Act* of the *Father* ? If this cannot be denied, without



out destroying the very Notion of Sonship, I then ask, Did the Father act by Necessity or Choice? Should it be said *He* acted by Necessity, this is the same Thing with saying he did not act at all, because a necessary Agent is, strictly and properly speaking, no Agent, but an Instrument only in the Hands of some superior Power. From this Affirmation then it follows, that the *Son* exists by the same Necessity as the Father does; that is, that he is an independent, underived, unoriginated, self-existent Being, which is not contended for by the most zealous of our Expositors. If it be said he acted by *Choice*, it will then follow, beyond the Reach of Controversy, that he might have chosen whether he would *act* or no. If this be not a just Way of Reasoning, I must wait for the Enlargement of my Faculties in a more perfect State, before I can pretend to determine what is. I submit it to your Consideration, my learned and worthy Friends, whether a Revelation, that lays down a Position subversive of clear, distinct Principles of Reason, does not furnish an unanswerable

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ble Argument against itself? And whether, therefore, it is not of some Importance to conclude, that those Divines, who believe the absolute supreme Deity of Christ to be revealed in the Gospel, misinterpret the Passages by which they would prove it?

Now I have mentioned the Word Importance, I wish, Gentlemen, you would be so kind to inform me (for to be sure you know) upon what Grounds it is that Writers insist so much on the Importance of this Doctrine, that is, the Importance of *their* Explanation of it? Dr. *Waterland* has published a large Book, and Dr. *Dodwell* a Sermon, with the sole View of establishing this Notion. But either I do not understand their Proofs, or I do not submit to them. When they affirm that the Belief of the Trinity, in their own Sense of it, is necessary to a good Life, I am not sure to what Branch of a good Life they would confine our Reflexions: If they would be understood to say, that the Belief of this Article is necessary in a Christian's System of Faith, this, we reply, is an evident Begging

ging of the Question: It is taking for granted the Point in Dispute: They allow it to be the Doctrine of Revelation only; and therefore it can become our Duty to embrace it, no farther than it is proved to be clearly *revealed*. At present the Thing we stick at is the *Meaning* of the Revelation; and, till we see this ascertained a little more to our Satisfaction, we admit of no Conclusion that can be formed to our Disadvantage, on account of any Defect in our Faith; because we are persuaded our Faith is not defective, while it includes every Truth that we believe God has distinctly proposed to it. Shew the Doctrine to be plainly *taught*, and then we shall readily allow its Importance; but to press its Importance, before you have proved its Truth, is beginning at the wrong End of the Syllogism, and deducing the Premises from the Conclusion: It is dictating to Providence, and in Effect affirming that, if it is not revealed, it ought to be.

If it be meant, that the Belief of the Trinity, in the highest Sense, is neces-

fary to a *practical* good Life, to a pious, sober, virtuous Conduct; it may be demanded in Return, whether a Man cannot obey the Precepts of the Gospel, without troubling his Head about the Hypostatick Union? But, without going farther round, or making Use of more Words than are necessary, I aver the Position to be false in Fact. It has fallen to my Lot to be acquainted with several Persons of both Sexes, who cannot come entirely up to the Standard of *Orthodoxy* upon this Point: Their Understandings are of the better Sort, which makes nothing in favour of the Doctrine; and they are known to be as exemplary in the Practice of every Duty, both to God and Man, as its most rigid and high-flying Advocates can pretend to be. Such an Insinuation therefore is not insidious and injurious only, but to the last Degree weak and foolish, since it is manifestly confuted by every Day's Experience. There is one Circumstance a good deal on the Side of those who happen to dissent from established Opinions; their very Doubts are some Proof that they  
*think;*



*think*; whereas thousands travel on with great Steadiness and great Zeal in the beaten Road of Orthodoxy without ever *thinking* at all. Here then is something of *vast Importance*, which has not been shewn to be necessary, either to the Faith or Practice of a Christian.

Whoever sincerely believes that Jesus is, in a Sense in which no other Being ever was, the Son of God; that he came into the World to lay down his Life for the Sins of Men; and that Acceptance is only to be obtained through *his* Merits and Intercession; and who, in Consequence of this Faith, conforms his Life to the Law of Christ—such an one seems to do all that is of *Importance* towards his Salvation; he fulfils the Conditions, and thereby answers the End, of the Covenant.

I would here refer my Readers to the Essay of that learned, great, and excellent Man, the Lord Chancellor *Clarendon*, whose Orthodoxy I have never yet heard questioned, against the multiplying Controversies, by insisting upon Particu-



lars that are not necessary to the Point in Debate; in which we find the following Words: "There are two Tables in the *New*, as well as in the *Old Testament*; the first contains the Body and Substance of Christian Religion instituted by our Saviour himself, and explained, as much as was necessary by his Apostles, and comprehended in few, and plain, and easy Words: *This is the Work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*, John vi. 29. *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved*, Rom. x. 9. He that heartily believes the Birth, Passion, and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, hath embraced the whole Body of Christian Religion. And then, if he observes the second Table, as he believes the first, his State of Salvation can never be doubted by himself, nor questioned by any body else. The second Table contains those Christian Duties and Practice, which result from the Doctrine of the first: *By their Fruits*  
*you*

*you shall know them. Whosoever beareth these Sayings of mine, and doth them, says our Saviour, Matt. vii. 20, 24. Now the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance: Against such there is no Law: And they that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts, Gal. v. 22, 23, 24. These are the two Tables of Christian Religion, and comprehend all that was instituted by our Saviour, and taught by his Apostles, as necessary to Salvation."*

Thus, Gentlemen, have I ventured to give you my Opinion freely upon this high and dangerous Subject: I have drawn out and laid before you some of those Arguments which Scripture and Reason both afford against a positive, dogmatical Spirit of pronouncing infallibly the Thing must be *so*, and cannot possibly be otherwise: And, so far as I am at present able to judge, they plead with equal Force and Solidity against the Use of the *Athanasian Creed*.  
And

And now, to apply a Passage of *Horace* to his Friend,

———— *Si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti ; si non, his utere mecum.*

Indeed, after so solemn a Decision in Favour of this Creed, such a Defence of it, as shall be sufficient to silence all my Doubts, is what I have Reason to look for at your Hands.

'Tis possible, after all, you may suspect I have been talking to you hitherto in a bantering and sarcastick Strain. You are, to be sure, at Liberty to indulge your Conjectures, and put what Interpretation upon the Matter you please. Be this as it may, I am really very serious, and very much in earnest, when I ask you, whether you can, upon cool Recollection, approve the severe Treatment that *Dr. Carter* has received from you? Allowing that you had fallen into a Squabble with him about the weighty Business of making a Parish-Clerk, was this, think ye, a proper Method of expressing your Resentment? Could you  
settle

settle the Dispute no otherwise than by driving him from the Exercise of his Function, and obliging him to keep a Curate? Herein, indeed, you did him a little Favour, which, I verily believe, you are not aware of; the Punishment intended being of such a Sort, as, you were certain, could never take Place, but from the Opinion you had of his Honesty. Your bear Testimony to his Character at the same Time that you hurt his Fortune. You must know him to be a Man possessed of a Mind above Prevarication, who would not appear outwardly to give his Assent to what in his Heart he could not approve. Would every Clergyman in the Kingdom declare his real Sentiments in this Affair as freely and publicly as this Gentleman has done, I suspect they would appear a larger Body of Men than some People are aware of; and from the Weight of Numbers perhaps the Objection might be removed. I hope, now the Doctor is a declared Heretick, that, according to the laudable Doctrine of some of our Divines, you  
are

are so consistent with yourselves as to avoid all Manner of Conversation with him ; nay, I can hardly think it quite safe for you to hold any Correspondence with his most ingenious and amiable Daughter, the young Lady being, I am apt to fear, a little infected with her Father's pestilential Principles. Pray, take my Advice, and keep your own Wives and Daughters, yea, and your Sons' too, out of her Way, or, let me tell you, very fatal may be the Consequences.

To conclude my Epistle : Whether this your Proceeding was the Effect of pure, genuine, Christian Good-nature ; or whether, in the Course of your Tradings with the opposite Continent, you have never smuggled one Cargo of *French* Principles, you yourselves best know. If the latter was the Case, it will surely be the wisest Way to confine your Dealings, for the future, to Brandy, Wine, Tea, Gold and Silver Lace, &c. &c. and not meddle with Goods of this Sort any more ; a Commodity so little suited to a Protestant Constitution. If any Thing like



like Spite and Revenge prompted you to Action, I see not how you can excuse yourselves from making the Doctor full Amends for the Expence and Inconvenience you have put him to. If it is our Misfortune to have a few hard Laws subsisting amongst us, (and very few, I think, there are) and the Heat of some over-zealous Churchmen makes it impracticable to repeal them, the candid and moderate Part of Mankind will always be very cautious of pressing them into Execution.

*F I N I S.*

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